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SO YOU WANT TO HELP MIGRANTS, SUGGESTIONS FOR CHURCHES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES WISHING TO ESTABLISH HELPING PROGRAMS FOR SEASONAL FARM WORKERS.

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THE MIGRANT MINISTRY, A UNITED CHURCH EFFORT TO SERVE SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL MIGRANTS, PRODUCED THIS BOOKLET FOR THE PURPOSE OF OFFERING SUGGESTIONS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING MIGRANTS. WHILE MOST OF THESE SUGGESTIONS CAN BE CARRIED OUT IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER BY ANY GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS, IT WAS WRITTEN WITH CHURCH PEOPLE ESPECIALLY IN MIND. THE SUGGESTIONS INCLUDE--(1) UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF THE MIGRANT PEOPLE, (2) WORKING WITH OTHER CHURCH PEOPLE, (3) CARRYING OUT PROGRAMS OF SERVICE FOR MIGRANTS, (4) ESTABLISHING SPECIAL SERVICES WHERE SUCH SERVICES DO NOT PRESENTLY EXIST, (5) INTERPRETING THE MIGRANT PEOPLE TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND STIMULATING OTHERS TO ACTION, (6) WORKING WITH OTHER GROUPS, AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR A COMMUNITY-WIDE APPROACH TO MIGRANT PROBLEMS, (7) WORKING TOWARDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF BASIC LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS, (8) HELPING MIGRANTS RESETTLE, AND (9) HELPING FINANCE MIGRANT PROGRAMS. (ES)

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So You Want To Help Migrants

Suggestions for Churches and Their Communities Wishing to Establish Helping Programs for Seasonal Farm Workers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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"The stranger who sojourns with you shall be
to you as the native among you,
and you shall love him as yourself"
Lev. 19:34

SO YOU WANT TO HELP MIGRANTS. . .

This booklet is written to offer suggestions for the many people who write the Migrant Ministry asking the question: "How can we help the migrant people?"

Most of the suggestions contained in these pages can be carried out in one form or another by any group of concerned citizens. We hope they will be. However, because the suggestions come out of more than forty years of experience on the part of Protestant church people in helping migrants, this booklet is written with church people especially in mind.

SO YOU WANT TO HELP MIGRANTS? Well, in cooperation with others of good will, here are some things that you can do . . .

1. Understand the problems and needs of the migrant people.
2. Work with other church people.
3. Carry out programs of service for migrants.
4. Establish special services where such services do not presently exist.
5. Interpret the migrant people to your community and stimulate others to action.
6. Work with other groups, agencies and organizations for a community-wide approach to migrant problems.
7. Work towards the improvement of basic living and working conditions.
8. Help migrants resettle.
9. Help finance the work.

The following pages will provide suggestions as to how you can best help migrants in each of the areas listed.

1. YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF THE MIGRANT PEOPLE

> "He deemed it essential, it would seem, to know the man before attempting to do him good."
>
> --Nathaniel Hawthorne

While you will want to learn for yourself the particular characteristics, problems and needs of the migrant people who come to your community, the following are some descriptive statements which apply generally to all migrants:

The migrant people:

--Come to your community to work
--Have been invited because they are needed to do an essential job
--Work long hours at arduous tasks
--Are not "drifters" or "gypsies" trying to avoid responsibility
--Travel "on the season" because their home locality cannot provide adequate work

--Are men, women, teen-agers, children, infants, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, workers and homemakers
--Frequently travel and work as families
--Bring their children to work alongside of parents to provide a little more income
--Maintain a home somewhere to which they return each year
--Frequently support aging relatives, pay rents, mortgages and taxes

--Are handicapped by a life-history of poverty and limited opportunity
--Lack the chance to be up to standard in education, health, vocational skill, citizenship and other important areas of life in a modern society
--Work as migrants because they lack skills to change to occupations with greater opportunity
--Tend to remain as migrants because children do not complete their education

--Have irregular work, low wages and few guarantees of job security
--Find it extremely difficult to maintain satisfactory family life because of travel and low income
--Are excluded from most of the protective laws, benefits and services available to community residents

--Are subject to discrimination because of racial or cultural differences, or because they are strangers in a community
--Are extremely vulnerable to family disaster when jobs fail to materialize, when accidents happen, when sickness strikes, when crops fail, or when bad weather occurs

--Are treated, and consequently feel, as utter strangers in community after community.

Differences?

Usually, the first characteristics of migrants observed by community residents are the differences. Sometimes the patterns of behavior and the way of life of the migrant people are startingly different in contrast to accepted patterns in the community. Some of the differences, of course, are the result of life circumstances of poverty, limited opportunity and isolation from the mainstream of community life. Other differences simply reflect other people's way of doing things and, as such, may really be perfectly normal and acceptable, their only fault being that they are different. A good test of judgment is to ask oneself, "How would I feel and act if I were in the migrant's shoes today?"

People are People

Persons who come to know the migrant people as individuals find quickly that below the surface characteristics, the people have the same needs, wants, hopes and fears that human beings everywhere have. In terms of their hopes, migrants want:

--a satisfactory means of livelihood: a steady job and a decent wage
--a chance to provide their families with food, shelter, clothing and even some of the "finer things of life"
--to be considered as worthy individuals and treated with normal courtesy, respect and understanding
--to feel that their work, however menial, makes a contribution, and earns for them a place of honor and dignity in life
--and, someday, to "do a little better," perhaps have a house of their own, roots in a stable community, and to live like other people.

So frequently, even these simple and basic needs cannot be attained by the migrant people.

What Can We Do?

Persons of good will, working along with others in the community, can help migrants by initiating efforts that lead to:

....Provision of activities of welcome, acceptance, information and friendly guidance for people who are strangers within the community.

....Extension of the services normally available to community residents so that seasonal people can have access to health, education, welfare, religious and other important programs.

....Provision of special helps to meet the strictly seasonal problems and needs such as the establishment of child-care center, health and medical activities, referral and emergency programs.

....Provision of programs to help remedy some of the basic lacks in knowledge and skill that handicap the people, such as establishment of summer schools, adult educational activities, vocational re-training, citizenship education, youth and character-building activities.

....Improvement of the basic conditions under which the people work and live.

Whatever direction your efforts take, the critical need, as vital as the need for security, is the migrant's need for a sense of dignity and worth. Despite your good efforts, without such a sense, his life will change but little.

One way to move towards meeting this need is to listen with respect to what the people themselves say about their concerns, to involve them wherever possible in the planning and carrying out of program activities, and to help them develop skill and confidence for leadership and self-determination. This means, of course, that community representatives who adopt a policy of planning with rather than for the people should expect no built-in guarantees of thanks, no star-in-the-crown type of rewards, and no self-satisfaction, other than a sense of having done a much-needed job in a Christian, democratic and truly helping fashion.

2. YOU CAN WORK WITH OTHER CHURCH PEOPLE

One way in which church people have translated their concern into effective action has been to establish a Migrant Ministry program in their communities.

The Migrant Ministry is a nation-wide movement representing a united Protestant witness to serve the people who follow the crops. Its program is centered in the Christian faith, seeking to share that faith with the migrant and to develop in him a sense of his personal worth, belonging and responsibility. The Migrant Ministry seeks to awaken

the community to the opportunity and obligation of sharing equally all the protective benefits and warmth of community life. It challenges the churches to include their seasonal neighbors in their concern and full fellowship: it calls on the state and nation to apply Christian principles to the economy in which migrants work and live.

The Migrant Ministry today carries out its work through local programs in over 600 communities in 38 states. Nationally, the work is coordinated by the Division of Christian Life and Mission, National Council of Churches. In states, the work is guided by the State Migrant Committee, usually an arm of the State Council of Churches or the State Council of United Church Women.

But mainly the Migrant Ministry is a local movement. In the community, it is a partnership among church people across denominational lines. Its programs and activities are determined by a local Migrant Ministry committee, broadly representative of the churches in the community. While a small full-time staff coordinates the efforts among national, state, and local groups, the bulk of the work of direct service is carried out in the community. Each season, over 600 seasonal staff workers—ministers, teachers, nurses, social workers, college and seminary students—assist local Migrant Ministries in their chosen tasks. But most significant is the fact that each year more than 15,000 volunteers—church men, women, and youth—give witness to their Christian beliefs by serving directly in committee and program work in the community.

As you consider what your church, along with other churches, can do to help migrants, you will want to give consideration to establishing a Migrant Ministry program in your community and becoming a partner in the larger state and national effort. Guidance and help are available to you through your State Council of Churches and your area or regional office of the national Migrant Ministry. A list of state, area, and regional directors of migrant work is attached to this booklet for your reference. These experienced professional workers are eager to help you get started. Call on them.

3. YOU CAN CARRY OUT PROGRAMS OF SERVICE FOR MIGRANTS

The kind of program you choose will depend upon the actual problems and needs of the migrants in your community and the resources available. Local Migrant Ministries and other groups have found the following kinds of activities to be appropriate and quite effective when carried out regularly each season by Migrant Ministry staff and volunteers from the community's churches.

--<u>The religious ministry</u>:

Worship services, pastoral counselling, religious education through Sunday schools, Bible schools and related activities, geared to the background, needs and understanding of the people.

--<u>Welcome and visitation programs</u>:

Visitation of migrant newcomers by individuals or teams of church people or members of other organizations to welcome the newcomers to the community, its churches and other institutions, provide them with information about the community, its services and facilities, and establish continuing friendly relationships.

--<u>Referral services</u>:

Provision of effective channels of communication between the community and the migrant people so that in cases of individual or family need, in normal times or emergencies, the people can quickly find the proper source of help.

--<u>Social, educational and recreational programs</u>:

Friendship or week-end centers in churches or other facilities where migrants can visit, rest, get information, participate in activities; programs in labor camps or other places where the people live, family nights, sports, games, movies, group activities for various ages, classes of many kinds. Popular activities for adults include homemaking, sewing groups, infant care, literacy, language study, health and consumer education, home improvement, and crafts. School-age children respond to guided play and activities that provide new skills, a sense of achievement and group experience. Teen-agers enjoy group activities for fellowship and recreation, a chance to gain the skills of self-direction and educational activities, especially in pre-vocational education and homemaking.

--<u>Citizen and leadership education</u>:

Development of adult leadership in the group through participation in program planning and execution, participation in self-determining organizational activities, councils and committees, development of understanding of rights and responsibilities of the citizen; development of skills for communication to the community of migrant group concerns, are all goals for groups wishing to give basic assistance to migrant workers.

While some of these activities may be carried on, co-ordinated or supervised by seasonal or full-time staff workers, most of them can be carried out by volunteers. Your community and its churches have a surprising number of persons with skills and talents for various program activities. After all, church membership includes ministers, Sunday school teachers, doctors, nurses, health educators, nursery, elementary and high school teachers, adult educators, social workers, and other persons of special competence. Many Migrant Ministries find that women with families who can no longer be engaged in professional occupations are an excellent source of volunteers. Men's and youth groups can provide leadership of many kinds. And every church person can visit and extend a welcome to a migrant family.

Again, specific help in organizing these programs may be obtained from your state, area or regional director of migrant work.

4. YOU CAN ESTABLISH SPECIAL SERVICES WHERE SUCH SERVICES DO NOT PRESENTLY EXIST

Migrant Ministries and other groups frequently establish services to meet special needs when no other agency is available to do the job. Examples of such services which have been pioneered by Migrant Ministries are:

--Day-care centers for children whose parents work in the fields.
--Summer schools to supplement the interrupted education of children
--Health services such as maternal and child health clinics, immunization programs, mobile clinics, health education
--Special temporary aids such as food, clothing, shelter, counselling and other assistance in accidents or emergencies such as crop failures and weather crises.

It should be noted that such programs today require competent professional staffs and that all legal and professional standards and requirements should be carefully investigated and complied with.

Further, while Migrant Ministries and other groups often continue to sponsor such services after they have been initiated, more and more frequently such services are being carried out by public agencies in the community, under state guidance and often with public funds. In considering the feasibility of establishing such services, local groups should seek guidance and counsel from local or state school authorities, local or state public health officials, or local or state departments of public and child welfare.

5. YOU CAN HELP INTERPRET THE MIGRANT PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS TO THE COMMUNITY

Persons coming to know the migrant people through the Migrant Ministry and other group programs find themselves in a key position to interpret the people to the rest of the community. The aims of interpretive activities are to help the community understand the migrant's problems and needs, to create good will in his behalf, to promote his acceptance, and to stimulate other groups, agencies and organizations to establish or extend helping programs.

Speeches, public discussion, sympathetic newspaper articles, radio or television programs help do an interpretative job. Contacts with ministers, church members, civic leaders, farmers, businessmen and agency workers help create understanding. Public programs and presentations, stressing the contributions made by migrants to the community are helpful.

A special task often undertaken by Migrant Ministry participants is to work towards the establishment of programs which are more appropriately sponsored by groups other than the churches or the Migrant Ministry. Church people, as citizens, are frequently among those who first recognize the special needs of migrants and who have urged and helped school authorities, social agency personnel, civic officials and others to initiate needed services.

6. YOU CAN WORK WITH OTHERS FOR A COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT TO HELP MIGRANTS

Probably the most effective action Migrant Ministries and other groups can take is to work towards organized community-wide action to deal with the total complex of problems relating to migrants. No one group or agency can serve all of the migrant's needs, nor should it try to. The problems of migrants are the problems of the entire community. Many resources are needed to deal with these serious difficulties and a concerted attack is essential. Only as community members work together can substantial progress be made.

A most effective instrument for a community-wide approach is the Community Migrant Council. A council is comprised of representatives of as many groups, organizations and agencies as have a concern or which could provide a resource of one kind or another. Migrant Councils should have representation from the following kinds of groups:

The Migrant Ministry and other church groups
Health, welfare, leisure-time and character-building agencies
Public school authorities
State employment service officers

Farmer organizations
Civic and service clubs
Civic officials
Law enforcement agencies
Labor organizations
Racial or cultural organizations
County agent and home demonstration workers
Community Welfare Council of Social Agencies
Businessmen's organizations and professional societies
Interested individuals
Representatives from among the migrant people themselves, wherever possible

You may think of others in your community who should be invited to take part.

A Community Migrant Council can serve many important functions. Working together, its members can:

--Pool information, experience and ideas
--Find facts not immediately apparent
--Study problems and think through services needed
--Assess community resources available or needed
--Make a comprehensive plan of action that includes:

A. Activities that individual groups or agencies can do which are within their special realm, such as extending, adapting, or improving their services to meet special needs.

B. Activities that groups of agencies can do better together, such as providing teams of visitors who have health, education and recreational skills; conducting a combination day-care center and maternal health clinic.

C. Activities which all agencies can carry out together in the name of the community, such as publishing a directory of services and resources, sponsoring a Harvest Fiesta, establishing a central referral, case conference or emergency service.

--Coordinate the work to eliminate gaps and duplications in service
--Interpret the total migrant problem to the community, serve as a focal point of community effort, provide a place for public discussion of the problems and issues concerning migrants
--Evaluate together the effectiveness of the joint work
--Make a better plan for future seasons.

Councils and their member groups will find that many resources--funds, program ideas, standards--are available outside of the community. Many state and national organizations have long been concerned about migrant problems, and their numbers are increasing. Several national church groups have developed program concerns. Many local organizations may find that they are already affiliated with a national organization that can provide help.

Local groups should be aware of other resources in their states. Many states now have Governor's Advisory Committees on Migrant Labor, or similar commissions of state government to study and act on migrant problems. Your state agencies may coordinate their work through an interagency council. Voluntary state-wide social action groups are increasing in the form of citizens' committees. And, of course, many departments and bureaus of the Federal government provide resources of one kind or another. A list of references to information about these resources is provided at the end of this booklet.

Recently, new programs have been made possible through national legislation. These include manpower retraining, vocational training, special health services and others. Additional programs are being proposed in new legislation. Bringing such programs to the local community requires the approval and participation of local officials in the employment service, the health, education and welfare agencies. Further, the support of local groups and organizations is needed to impress state and national officials with the local needs. It is important, therefore, that concerned groups become aware of the programs that can be brought into the community and work together with all groups to initiate such programs and carry them out effectively.

7. YOU CAN WORK TOWARDS IMPROVING THE BASIC LIVING AND WORK CONDITIONS OF MIGRANTS

The goals adopted by Migrant Ministries and other concerned groups are to include the migrant people under the same protections and benefits of law that other groups now enjoy, and to extend special protections to offset the unusual conditions of migrant life and work.

Migrant Ministries and other groups are concerned for improvement in these areas:

--Child labor
--Residence laws
--Labor recruitment and employment processes
--Adequate wages
--Crew leader registration and control
--Extension of education for children and adults
--Housing and sanitation standards

--Extension of health services
--Safe transportation of workers
--Social security
--Vocational and other retraining opportunities
--Civil rights

The National Council of Churches, many state councils of churches, several Protestant denominations, other major church groups, and a host of other organizations have taken definite stands in these fields. Local Migrant Ministries and other groups should become aware of the provisions of existing local, state and federal laws in these fields, and learn something about their adequacy. Increasingly, new legislation is being proposed at all levels. Concerned persons should become familiar with these proposals, study their intent and possible results, taking whatever action, as individuals or groups, they deem it proper to take.

8. YOU CAN HELP MIGRANTS WHO ARE TRYING TO RESETTLE

You may find that some of the migrants in your community are no longer seasonal visitors, but stay the year around. Resettlement among migrants is an increasing trend. It is happening partially because the people are putting down new roots to find a better life and partially because mechanization in agriculture is reducing the opportunities for work.

A Migrant Ministry or other group, or a Community Migrant Council, should not lose sight of the resettling people simply because they are no longer temporary people. It is vital to help the people become contributing and responsible members of the community. Many of the programs and activities described in these pages are applicable to the problems of resettling people. Particularly important are those that aim towards integrating the people into the community. Newcomers need help to enable them to relate themselves effectively to work opportunities, churches, schools, agency programs, civic affairs, and to find a place in the community's on-going life.

The problems involved in resettlement are many and not easy to resolve. Whatever be done, it is essential that representatives of the resettling people be given a share in the planning process. To help the people attain the skill and confidence with which to represent themselves adequately, special programs of fundamental education, citizenship training and community development will be needed. An early step in any effort for resettling migrants will be to help the people establish organizations of their own through which they, too, can learn to work together and with others to improve their own lot in life.

8. YOU CAN HELP FINANCE THE WORK

If you cannot participate directly in the work in your community or if you live where there are no migrants, you can still help carry on the work of the Migrant Ministry nationally, in your state or in a community. Cash gifts will be welcomed by a local or state Migrant Ministry, or they may be sent, with your instructions, to:

The Migrant Ministry
Division of Christian Life and Mission
National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027

"Be ye all of one mind, having compassion,
one of another . . . . "

I Peter 3:8

KEY RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION

ON THE MIGRANT PEOPLE:

Bluteell, Louise R., The Harvesters
Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1961
Bluteell, Louise R., This is the Migrant
Friendship Press, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027
--60¢
U.S. Department of Labor, Farm Labor Fact Book
Order from: Supt. of Documents, U.S. Government Printing
Office, Washington, D.C. 20025--$1.00

ON THE MIGRANT MINISTRY:

Let Justice Roll Down--10¢

The Migrant Ministry (Annual Report)*
The Forgotten People (Bulletin Insert)*

Order from: The Migrant Ministry, Division of Christian
Life and Mission, National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027

*Free in limited quantities

ON THE WORK OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

The Bishops' Committee for Migrant Workers, 1300 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 5, Illinois, coordinates Roman Catholic work in this field.

Programs of National Organizations for Migrant Farm Workers and Their Families, Bulletin 238, Dec. 1961, U.S. Dept. of Labor. Order from: Bureau of Labor Standards, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Washington D.C. 20025 (single copies free).

ON THE WORK OF STATE COMMITTEES ON MIGRANT LABOR:

Write to State Councils of Churches, Migrant Ministry Staff

ON THE WORK OF AGENCIES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT:

The President's Committee on Migratory Labor, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Washington 25, D.C., coordinates the efforts of many federal departments and bureaus, including: Labor; Health, Education and Welfare; Agriculture; Interior. Write for information.

ON COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR MIGRANTS:

A Guide to Community Efforts to Improve Conditions for Agricultural Migrants, Bulletin 259, 1963, U.S. Dept. of Labor. Order from: Dept. of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20025—25¢

ON THE WORK OF CITIZENS' SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEES:

National Farm Labor Advisory Committee, 112 East 19th Street, New York, New York 10003

ON CURRENT LEGISLATION BEFORE THE U.S. CONGRESS

Senate Sub-Committee on Migrant Labor, New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20025
The National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor, 2027 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C 20036
The National Consumers League, 1029 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005

THE GOALS OF THE MIGRANT MINISTRY

In 1960, the Migrant Ministry of the National Council of Churches marked its fortieth anniversary of service to seasonal farm workers and their families by developing goals for the decade ahead. The Migrant Ministry committee of each state took stock of the living and working conditions within its borders and evaluated its own program for meeting the social and spiritual needs of its migrant people. Supplementing existing policy statements, these state committee findings provided a practical working document. Representatives from state migrant committees, from denominational mission boards, and from specialized agencies both public and private, gave advisory assistance to the National Migrant Committee in the development of the new national goals. Simultaneously, state migrant committees began to work out new goals of their own, adapted to the particular needs of their regions. The national policy and program goals for this decade include:

1. To give migrant people opportunity for worship and Christian education, through local churches and through direct ministry, always without proselytism or coercion.
2. To reduce agricultural migrancy to a minimum.
3. To eliminate importation of labor.
4. To stimulate provision of basic education and vocational training for adults.
5. To stimulate extension of educational opportunity to children.
6. To work for improved conditions in housing and transportation.
7. To eliminate legal exemptions in labor legislation and discrimination in health and welfare services.
8. To encourage social acceptance and participation in church and community life.
9. To encourage among migrant people themselves responsible and democratic organization for self-help, economic and civic.
10. To keep policy and program flexible in the light of changing conditions.

At least five of these goals (1, 4, 5, 8, 9) assume reality only so far as they touch the lives of migrants themselves. Much of the burden of investing them with meaning and substance rests upon local congregations working together through local migrant committees. Consequently, state committee reports, based in turn on reports from local committees, take on special significance as the 1960 decade nears the halfway point.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In the Migrant Ministry the churches are united to serve men, women, and children who are following the crops. This program is centered in the Christian faith and seeks to share that faith with the migrant, and to develop in him a sense of his personal worth, belonging, and responsibility. It seeks to awaken the community to the opportunity and obligation of sharing equally all the protective benefits and warmth of community life. It challenges the local churches to include these seasonal neighbors in their concern and full fellowship. It calls on the state and nation to apply Christian principles to the economy in which migrants live and work.

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